



# SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

Official Publication of the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair

January 1998

## BAR-97 Phase-In Begins With Relatively Few Glitches

**T**he December 1 BAR-97 phase-in began with relatively few glitches. Some shops were erroneously locked out, but BAR field representatives brought most of those affected into the program within a couple of days of kick-off.

"It's been a long time coming, but the BAR-97 program has officially begun," said BAR Chief Marty Keller. "The kick-off began just about as we expected and the number of stations participating means the capacity exists to meet the expected demand."

At press time, manufacturers reported to BAR that 3,340 Enhanced Area stations had purchased BAR-97 systems by December 1. In addition, more than 5,500 technicians had also completed the 8-hour Transition Training Course and were ready to begin learning to use the new system in their shops.

BAR's field office representatives have worked continuously since December 1

to quickly initialize BAR-97 platforms at the rate of 60 to 70 stations per day. Again, at press time, more than 950 units had been initialized.

Full certification is still proceeding at full speed, and at press time BAR-97 system software manufactured by SPX, ESP, and Snap-On/Sun had entered beta testing. These three manufacturers represent approximately 90 percent of California's BAR-97 Emission Inspection System (EIS) market.

Once the BAR-97 software successfully completes at least three weeks of beta testing, the BAR-97 units will be eligible for full certification. Manufacturers will then install the software in their respective units and the BAR-97 systems will be fully operational. (Be sure to check the Web Page at

**[www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov)** weekly for certification status!)

The two remaining EIS manufacturers, Worldwide and Unidyne, are still in the

certification process, with Worldwide possibly entering the beta testing phase early this month. Unidyne's analyzer has entered the certification process.

Throughout December, consumer demand for Smog Checks was being adequately met by the functioning stations and BAR data indicates that the volume of tests being conducted remained the same as before phase-in began.

Likewise, consumer calls to the Department of Consumer Affairs' Consumer Information Center (DCA/CIC) increased by about 500 calls per day, but CIC staff were able to respond to all calls within an average of two minutes and 15 seconds.

"In all, there was an excellent effort by all concerned to make certain consumers were able to get their Smog Checks done conveniently and in a timely manner," Keller added. •

## VEHICLES EXEMPT FROM SMOG CHECKS, OTHER CHANGES TAKE EFFECT

**V**ehicles four years old and newer, and vehicles 1973 and older, are now exempt from Smog Checks. Both exemptions took effect January 1 under new legislation passed and signed by the Governor last year.

Moreover, gross-polluting vehicles are no longer required to undergo annual Smog Check inspections at Test-Only stations. Once a Gross Polluter is repaired and verified at a Test-Only station, the vehicle will remain in its normal biennial testing cycle.

"Technicians may not perform Smog Checks on any of these exempt vehicles, and may not lead any consumers to believe they must have a Smog Check if their vehicles are exempt from the program," said Mike Vanderlaan, BAR's Manager of Smog Check Field

Operations. "Technicians who violate this new law will be subject to discipline."

Exemption of new vehicles was recommended by the Inspection and Maintenance Review Committee because data showed that 99 percent of new vehicles pass the Smog Check in their first four years. The 1973 and older vehicles were also exempted by the Legislature, and by 2003 a rolling 30-year exemption will apply.

Smog Check stations and technicians have also been warned in recent electronic transmission messages that they are prohibited from leading any customer to believe they can perform an official Smog Check or issue a certificate if the station has been locked out from performing official Smog Checks and issuing certificates.

If Enhanced Areas stations have a BAR-90 analyzer but not a BAR-97 Emissions Inspection System (EIS), they are limited to performing emissions-related repairs. In addition, after March 1, 1998, stations without the BAR-97 EIS will be required to obtain a new repair-only station license to replace the current test-and-repair station license.

The key to complying with the new laws in these cases is full disclosure to the consumer," Vanderlaan explained. •

### KEY ACTION DATES

#### BAR-97 Emission Inspection Systems (EIS)

**1998**

**March 1**

All BAR-97 EIS in Enhanced Areas go on-line; only BAR-97 tests accepted in Enhanced Areas

## “FAST TRACK” LICENSING STILL AN OPTION

A “Fast Track” licensing option offered in October 1996 to technicians on probation or with disciplinary actions pending is still an option, according to Mike Vanderlaan, BAR’s Manager of Smog Check Field Operations.

Under the program, Smog Check technicians who hold EU licenses may be issued new, probationary (EA/EB) licenses if they agree to continue their probation on the new license. As explained in 1996, BAR is prohibited from reissuing or renewing any EU licenses that expire after December 31, 1995. BAR’s “Fast Track” stipulation process, however, can speed up the time between the expiration of the EU license and the issuance of the EA/EB license.

EU technicians who have disciplinary actions pending or are on probation are subject to denial when they apply for a new EA/EB license. A formal appeal process must be completed, including filing legal documents, hearings and issuance of final decisions before any application for the EA/EB license can be considered or issued.

“The ‘Fast Track’ program is designed to minimize the impact of disciplinary actions on technicians and employers,” Vanderlaan said. “Technicians on probation who are willing to stipulate, and are not represented by an attorney, may enter into a formal agreement with BAR without getting the Attorney General’s office involved.”

Once the Attorney General’s office is involved in a pending action, however, any stipulated settlements must be negotiated through the Attorney General’s office.

Technicians with pending administrative disciplinary actions may also enter into a stipulated settlement which would include similar provisions for imposing terms and conditions of probation on the new EA/EB license issued to them.

Technicians who wish to participate in “Fast Track” should apply for their new EA/EB license at least three to six months before their EU license expires. For those technicians already on probation, here’s how you can participate in the “Fast Track” program:

- complete an Application for Smog Check License (BAR form T-6 (Rev. 6/96);
- be sure to answer the background questions truthfully;
- indicate, either in the application or in an attached note, that you are willing to continue probation on the new EA/EB license;
- BAR staff will review applicant’s records and determine if they are eligible to participate in the “Fast Track” process; and
- BAR will respond in writing to the applicant with further instructions and explanations of the program’s details.

This process can reduce the time involved in getting a new EA/EB license by as much as two to three months, and technicians may avoid being out of work if their EU license expires before we can agree to issuing a probationary EA/EB license,” Vanderlaan added. •

### Update Training Required for License Renewal

Under existing regulations, 20 hours of update training can be required for all Smog Check technicians when applying for initial or renewal licenses.

The *Advanced Emissions Diagnostics Course* is the first update course to be required. Smog Check technicians in Enhanced Areas will be required to pass the course as a condition of applying for an EA license after June 30, 1998, or renewing a license that expires after June 30, 1998.

“This minimum 20-hour update training course will be available at BAR-certified advanced schools,” said George Adelsperger, Manager of BAR’s Manuals and Publications Branch. “The course covers detailed diagnostic and repair strategies for vehicles that fail the loaded-mode emissions inspection.”

Technicians are encouraged to complete the course as soon as possible to help them succeed with loaded-mode emissions testing and repairs. A list of schools offering the advanced course is

## CSSARA Offers Free Training To Those Who Qualify

Smog technicians who qualify can receive 60-hours of free training in a BAR-approved program through the California Service Station and Automotive Repair Association’s Technician Training Program, Inc.

Automotive instructors from Automotive Diagnostics/SPX, Snap-On, and Sequoia Institute will provide instruction in Advanced Engine Performance (alternate L-1 course), Advanced Emission Diagnostics (BAR 20-hour update training), and Dynamometer Training (BAR-97 Transition Course) at the following locations: Union City, Sacramento, Riverside, Fremont, Long Beach, Fresno, San Diego, Anaheim, Carlsbad, Colton, North Hollywood, Sun Valley, Carson, Fullerton, Modesto.

The training, funded through the State’s Employment Training Panel, will meet the new Smog Technician requirements for certification and is available for technicians who meet the following requirements:

- Basic smog technician license;
- Completion of A-6 and A8 training;
- Minimum wage of \$14.57 (or \$13.84 in some counties) including benefits;
- Full-time employment 90 days prior to training;
- Full-time employment 90 days after training; and
- Mandatory 100 percent attendance at all training sessions.

Interested and qualified smog technicians may call the CSSARA office at (415) 892-6377 to request an application.

“This free training represents a \$1,200 value to those technicians who qualify,” said CSSARA’s Director of Training, Sunny Campbell. “We urge technicians to take advantage of this very special offer.” •

available by calling the Consumer Information Center at 1-800-952-5210 or by checking the Web Page at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or [www.smogcheck.org](http://www.smogcheck.org) •

## Issues & Answers

*The Issues & Answers column is for readers to ask questions about topics that are of general interest to the auto repair industry and the Smog Check program. Answers to your questions will be researched and published here. You are encouraged to submit your questions to: Smog Check Advisory, P. O. Box 188978, Sacramento, CA 95818. All questions must be accompanied by a name, address and telephone number, and will be verified before publication. Questions will be answered and published on a space available basis.*

— The Editors

**Q.** In the September edition of the Smog Check Advisory you stated that some 1984-86 GM and fuel injected import vehicles may need to be directed to the referee due to difficulty meeting the 2500 rpm CO standards. You also noted that the affected vehicles could be identified by the presence of a "Y" in the eighth digit of the VIN. Does this mean of identification only apply to the GM vehicles?

The increase of "test-only" stations to the program has no doubt resulted in added convenience for many motorists, "gross polluters" in particular. What concerns me is that many gross polluters are ping-ponging between repair shops and test-only centers. This is particularly frustrating for them. Is anything being done to address this situation or to make the process more consumer friendly?

—Mike Piercy, San Pedro, CA.

**A.** To answer your first question, the "Y" designation applies only to special procedures for the 1984-86 GM vehicles listed in our previous story. The eighth character in a 17 digit VIN identifies the engine type. A "Y" can mean different things for different years and manufacturers.

As to your concern about Gross Polluting vehicles being ping-ponged between repair shops and Test-Only Stations, we share your concerns. That's why BAR has implemented a pilot program with 100 specially selected Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) stations. Those GSGR technicians will be authorized to both repair and certify gross polluting vehicles. Data collected on the performance of these pilot program shops will set the standard for diagnosing and repairing gross polluting vehicles that will pass the new ASM test. •

## List of Aftermarket Parts Will Reduce Unnecessary Referee Referrals

**B**AR will soon be making the Air Resources Board's list of approved aftermarket parts available to both technicians and consumers, and is currently developing regulations requiring stations to use the available information before referring vehicles to Referee Stations.

Part II, Section 6 and Appendix K of the Smog Check Inspection Manual give specific instructions about aftermarket parts. Before failing a vehicle with aftermarket parts, or sending it to a Referee, technicians must do the following:

- check the Smog Check Inspection Manual to see if the part needs an Air Resources Board (ARB) executive order;
- check the list of approved parts in Appendix K of the Smog Check Inspection Manual; and
- check with the Emission Parts Locator toll-free at 1-800-826-3566 or look for the list on BAR's Web Page at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or [www.smogcheck.org](http://www.smogcheck.org).

The list of aftermarket parts will be updated monthly with the Parts Locator and on the Web Page. Enhanced search features will be installed to make it easier to use the list on the Web Page. •



## IMRC Executive Officer Named

**J**oel Schwartz, former senior fiscal and policy analyst with the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), which provides non-partisan research and advice to the Legislature, has been named Executive Officer for the I&M Review Committee.

Prior to his LAO appointment, Schwartz was an air pollution policy analyst for nearly four years, including serving as a special consultant to the I&M Review Committee in the early 1990s.

As an LAO analyst for the last 2-1/2 years, Schwartz evaluated a range of K-12 education issues and programs, including class size reduction, child care and charter schools.

Schwartz graduated from Cornell University with a BA in chemistry, and from Caltech with an MS in planetary science. He assumed his Executive Officer duties with the I&M Review Committee on December 22. •

## TECHNICIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE BEING ESTABLISHED

**A** committee of approximately 10 automotive technicians (not shop owners) from across California are being sought to act as advisors to BAR, according to BAR Chief Marty Keller.

"We think it will be very helpful to get the perspective on Smog Check issues from everyday working technicians,"

Keller said. "This feedback will be useful to all of us at BAR and to consumers as well."

BAR representatives are currently contacting technicians to confirm their interest in serving on this committee. The names of the members will be announced in the February edition of the Smog Check Advisory. •



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## BAR FIELD OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS

Bakersfield ..... (805) 833-6304  
Riverside ..... (909) 782-4250  
Canoga Park ... (818) 596-4400  
Sacramento .... (916) 255-4200  
Culver City ..... (310) 410-0024  
San Jose ..... (408) 277-1860  
Fresno ..... (209) 445-5015  
South El Monte (818) 575-6934  
Fullerton ..... (714) 680-7851  
Hayward ..... (510) 785-1961  
Oceanside ..... (760) 439-0942

DCA Cashiering (916) 322-7002  
DCA Licensing (916) 322-4010  
ET Help Desk . (916) 255-4476  
MCI ..... (800) 731-SMOG  
(Then press 5 for technical support)  
Test-Only/Referee  
Scheduling Center (800) 622-7733

**DCA Hotline (800) 952-5210**

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## THE BOTTOM LINE

- 108 Cut score on the current smog exam;
- 72.38 Percent of technicians (380) who passed EA Smog Check exam in November;
- 63.01 Percent of technicians (327) who passed EA Smog Check exam in October
- 2 million Number of visits to the DCA/BAR Web Page as of November 20;
- 750 CREW consumer interventions since program began (through November 1);
- 621 Vehicles repaired as a result of CREW interventions;
- 83 Percent success rate for CREW;
- 1,654 Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair stations as of Dec. 5.

## Little Scoops...

- ▲ Some equipment manufacturers may be offering training on the general use and maintenance of their dynamometers. While those courses are important, they do not meet the requirements for a licensed technician. Only the 8-hour BAR-97 Transition Course completed at a BAR-certified advanced training institution meets the training required to obtain the ASM endorsement. A list of BAR-certified training institutions is available by calling 1-800-952-5210 or on the Web at: [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov)
- ▲ As reported earlier, all loaded-mode tests in Enhanced Areas will include the same comprehensive visual inspections, and a functional check of the ignition timing, as well as the gas cap and malfunction indicator light (MIL). Follow the prompts on your BAR-97, as its software was

revised *after* the BAR-97 Transition Class student workbook was printed.

- ▲ A BAR tip! It is a good idea to keep copies of the *Smog Check Advisory* with your Smog Check Inspection Manual. The *Smog Check Advisory* articles are the most current information even though they may conflict with the Smog Check manual. The articles are an official notice that modify the current Smog Check manual. The next manual (out in early 1998) will reflect the information provided in the *Smog Check Advisory*.
- ▲ A brochure titled "Automotive Information and Careers for Women" is now available free of charge from the Women's Board of the Car Care Council at [www.carcarecouncil.org](http://www.carcarecouncil.org). The CCC encourages women to learn how to maintain their vehicles and seek careers in the automotive industry.

Visit DCA/BAR's new Web site!  
[www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or [www.smogcheck.org](http://www.smogcheck.org)